

The Desire To Be First (Mark 9:33-37)

Proposition: We can all quench our thirst for exaltation by following the instructions Jesus corrects His disciples with.

- I. Be Aware of our Exaltation (Vs. 34c)
 - A. Our Apt of Exaltation (Vs. 34c)
 - B. Our Arrogance in Exaltation (Vs. 34c)
- II. Be Assured of our Examination (Vs. 33)
 - A. A Close Examination (Vs. 34)
 - B. A Questioning examination (Vs. 33c)
- III. Be Advised of His Explanation (Vs. 35)
 - A. The Paradox of His Explanation (Vs. 35b-d)
 - B. The Precision of His Explanation (Vs. 35b-d)
- IV. Be Attentive to His Example (Vs. 36-37)
 - A. The Humility of His Example (Vs. 36)
 - B. The Heart of His Example (Vs. 37)

The Desire To Be First (MK 9:33-37)

With all the bowl games going on now you will almost assuredly see the scene I'm about to tell you about. During a time out the camera will pan over into the stands to a group of rowdy college kids who will crawl over each other to get as close to the camera as they can. They may be ranked 23 in the nation, but they are #1. I remember my college coach saying, if you a pitcher digger, be the best, candlestick make, best I guess there's a little of that in all us. But it is a wide open highway to pride and self exaltation. In the life of a believer God is #1, not me. So how do we fulfill this God

I. Be Aware of Our Exaltation - One must wonder where this conversation had its origin. Maybe it was from Peter Jones, + Jan Experiencia. It does show that

A. Our Apt. of Exaltation - Just like the college kid pointing #1 we all have a little of that in us. We are not exempt from it because we are followers of Christ. These disciples were within an arms reach away from Jesus and were full of themselves. Where does it come from? Where is its origin. Could it be in Gen 3:5 the lie of Satan to

lie like God. Where ever it came from we all have it.

B. Our Arrogence in Exaltation - Jesus in the previous verses had explained that he was going to Jerusalem to die, and there they are disputing about the Calvary positions. One author wrote: "There is something heart-breaking in the thought of Jesus going towards a Cross and his disciples arguing about who would be greatest." From 17:19; 25:6-7 John chs 14:13 Lucifer was cast out of heaven for self exalting words. What a tragedy.

II. Be Assured of Our Examination
The disciples seemed to assume their arrogant conversation went unnoticed, but it wasn't long until their words were called ^{question} into ^{question} **A. A Close Examination** - The omniscient Lord Jesus heard every word of their vindeliberation. That's the whole reason this subject was brought up. Jesus knew of their self exalting hearts. One of the most frightening verses in the Bible is Matt 10:36. Let us never forget the little children song oh be careful little lips what you say... Our conversations are never private. ⁽⁵⁾ There is always a close examination.

B. A Questioning Examination - Jesus asked not to Gain Knowledge but but to bring confession. Their conversation was brought to light by Jesus Question.

- 1) ...this God given desire of excellence without falling into the sinful pitfalls that so often accompany those desires? Well here in out text Jesus teaches his disciples who are caught up in such a deceitful sin. I believe that we can all quench our thirst for exaltation by following the instructions Jesus corrects His disciples with.
- 2) ...that they are so much like you and I.
- 3) **Proverbs 17:19** He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. **Proverbs 25:6-7** Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen. **Isaiah 14:13-14** For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
- 4) **Matthew 12:36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.
- 5) ...close examination. How different would our lives be if we were to stop and ask "Could I go and do this if Jesus were watching me? Could I go on saying the things I'm saying, if Jesus were hearing?" Practicing the presence of Jesus would radically change our lives.

1) ...this God given desire of excellence without falling into the sinful pitfall that so often accompany those desires. Well here is out that Jesus teaches his disciples who are caught up in such a beautiful and righteous that we can all grasp our thirst for exaltation by following the instruction Jesus connects His disciples with.

2) ...that they are to be like you and I.

3) Proverbs 23:2-7. The lesson transition that Jesus teaches and he that exalts his ego seeks destruction. Proverbs 23:2-7 put out faith itself in the presence of the king and stand not in the place of great men. For better it is that it be said unto them, Come go hither, than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the king whom thou have seen. Isaiah 14:13-14. For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, as the idea of the north, I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the most high.

1) ...made a real contribution o life are the men' who said to themselves, not, "How can I use the state and society to further my own prestige and my own personal ambitions?" but, "How can I use my personal gifts and talents to serve the state?"

were to stand and say, "Could I go and do this if Jesus were watching me? Could I go on saying the things I say, if Jesus were hearing?" Practicing the presence of Jesus would radically change our lives.

Their response was silence. They knew well their conversation was wrong. These disciples being called into account is a stern warning to us, and the ease with which so quickly take one another down ^{and} at the same time raise our selves with our tongue.

III. Be Advised by His Explanation

We take this matter so lightly in our lives but Jesus response to their silence was very serious. He took an official teaching position of

A. The Paradox of His Explanation

Jesus' explanation is a bit of a paradox. A Paradox is a statement that seems to contradict itself. Jesus said you want to be #1 then you must become dead last.

If you want to be great then you must be the least. Jesus substitutes ambition for servitude. You are not the greatest by being master, but servant. This completely goes against our flesh and reasoning but

B. The Precision of His Explanation

But how true Jesus is concerning real greatness. Barclay "The really great men, the men remembered as having made a

Jesus Christ the highest and most exalted in the universe humbled himself from the heights of heaven to be so low as to wash the feet of sinful men. Matthew Henry said "Those who are

most humble and self-denying do most resemble Christ

IV. Be Attentive to His Example - To illustrate how this servant greatness attracts the heart of God, Jesus brings a child into their midst to illustrate

A. The Humility of His Example

The unspeaking child is an example of submission + Humility (Wiersbe). The child has nothing to exalt himself about. He can't care for himself, he can't meet his own needs. The world around us says you are great if people work for you. Jesus says greatness comes from serving others. This attempt to please parents. And the parents exalt the child with love and affection. ^{child = servant in a sense}

B. The Heart of His Example

Greatness doesn't come from receiving or serving a king. It comes from receiving and serving the least, the weak, the helpless of all, the child.

The greatest of all the servants of God are those that seek out to serve these that are the least in the world. When we do this we become great in the sight of both the Lord Jesus + our heavenly Father.

VI. Close: Do you want to truly be great? Then you must become least. Remember God's measure of greatness is not that of the world's. What about your words

- 1) ...resemble Christ, and shall be the most tenderly owned by Him."